"THE STATUE OF LIBERTY"

A TABLOID FARCICAL COMEDY

IN

THREE ACTS

BY

MIRON LEFFINGWELL

NOTE

"THE STATUE OF LIBERTY."

A Tabloid Farcial Comedy in Three Acts

By

LIRON LEFFINGWELL.

Cast.

Alonzo Jenkins----------A young sculptor.

Jack Trip----------Who lives on his wits.

William Staggers----------Who changed his name.

Imogene----------A California heiress.

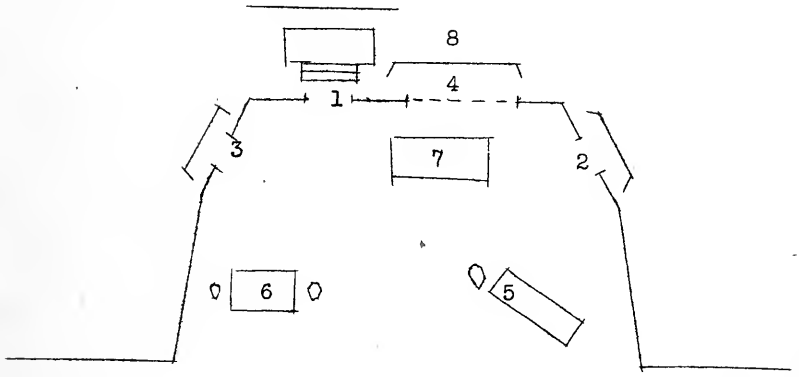
Cynthia----------The famous cataleptic of the ages.

Scene:-- Alonzo'sstudio.
Time included in action, one hour.

---oooOOOOOOOOooo---

Act First.

An apartment in Cynthia Trip's rooming house. Sculptor's studio set.



E X P L A N A T I O N

(1) Arch backed by interior backing. (2) Set door obliqued L.U.E. Interior backing. (3) Set door obliqued R.U.E. Interior backing. (4) Window at back of L. of C. Exterior backing. (5) Couch down L.C. (6) Table and chairs down R.C. (9) Modeling table with sculptor's modeling tools. Mallets, chisels, etc. Lumps of clay. (8) Exterior backing. Behind arch 1, is a square pedestal, painted white. Step up same. Decorate scene with busts, medallions, plaster figures, arms, hands and feet etc. Indian clubs, foils, boxing gloves; on back of chair L.C. hangs a loud smoking jacket and fez cap. A white model of torch as used by Liberty Enlightening the World is on table 7.

---oooOOOO. .OOoo---

Act

At Rise:-- Cynthia discovered in chair L. of table - arm chair. Jack in shirt sleeves is pacing up and down stage L. Cynthia wears loose flowing robe. She is under-dressed for statue which should not be burlesqued in make up. The criticisms of Staggers are supposed to be inspired by malice and not justified by appearance of statue. Staggers own make-up can be as freakish as actor chooses after he is placed on pedestal.

Jack

This business don't pay.

Cynthia

Well, I should say not.

Jack

We must get some money someway - but how?

Cynthia

Have you ever thought of going to work?

Jack

Work? Haven't I worked everybody I know?

Cynthia

That's just it. you'd better turn over a new leaf.

Jack

What! And work somebody I don't know?

Cynthia

I am speaking of physical labor.

Jack

What - a man with a head like mine?

Cynthia

Jack! Jack! They could only turn billiard balls out of your solid ivory cranium.

Jack

That's a pretty thing for you to say to your little brother, when our busted condition is all your fault.

Cynthia

My fault?

Jack

Sure, it was your shingle on the front door that put us in this hole. "Madame Cynthia - The Great Babylonian Seeress - reveals the past, present and future. Reunites the parted - gives advice on the stock market - discovers buried treausre. Consult at once the peerless capaleptic of the ages."

Cynthia

Well, it strike me that's a pretty good shingle.

Jack

It isn't very good for a lady who lets out furnished rooms in a select neighborhood. We can't combine the two businesses and now the rooms have nobody in them.

Cynthia

Nobody? Why, we have nothing in them, Jack. The installment man took everything away this morning - all the furniture. They started to strip this apartment also , although I assured them that the things were Mr. Jenkins own personal effects here. They broke his big statue to pieces, trying to move it just as he came in and the language he used reminded me of the time we traveled with old Doctor Macks' corn salve show.

Jack

(Impatiently) Don't dig up the past! I suppose now we'll lose Jenkins.

Cynthia

I shouldn't wonder. He threatened suicide. I advised him to consult the spirits and he said he would; and he just sent out for a bottle of Scotch Whiskey and retired to his bed-room.

Jack

Jack

What! In there? (Pointing R) He shall not die alone. I will go with him. (Rushes off R. door)

Cynthia

I wish you both a happy suicide. That's the way with men. They get dead broke, then they want to get dead drunk. (Bell sounds outside) There's the bell. I suppose someone wants to consult the seeress. They can. I'll go into a trance immediately if they show me some real money. (Exits L.U.E. Re-enter Jack with whiskey bottle, which he holds out of reach of Alonzo Jenkins who chases him on)

Alonzo

Give me that bottle.

Jack

No, you shall not flirt with the demon. This is vile stuff.

Alonzo

It isn't. I paid a dollar and a half for it.

Jack

All liquor is vile. Don't - don't - I beg of you - blast your young life - blight your career! Think of your future! Don't spoil what might have been a bright finish ? I implore you! (Takes drink from bottle)

Alonzo

I'll make you think of your own finish if you don't give up my bottle.

Jack

My finish doesn't matter. I am but the plaything of fate - the sport of destiny - likely to be blown off of this mundane sphere at any minute.

Alonzo

Well, I'm not going to "Blow you off" to any of my booze.

Jack

Think of what you have before you.

Alonzo

I'm trying to forget it. (Takes bottle away from Jack, places it on table)

Cynthia

(Re-enters) Here is a telegram, Mr. Jenkins. (Hands him telegram.)

Alonzo

A telegram! Oh misery, I dread to open it.

Jack

(Advancing) Let me open it. It may be money.

Alonzo

Away! (Opens telegram, reads it)Ah, as I feared. I am loat! I am lost! (Falls in seat, drops telegram. Cynthia picks it up. Alonzo buries his face in his hands)

Cynthia

(Reads) " am coming with Staggers this afternoon to inspect your work. I-m-o-gee."

Jack

Oh Gee? Why Oh Gee?

Alonzo

Imogene! Imogene her name is - you lap eared donkey.

Jack

But she says she's coming with "Staggers."

Alonzo

What of it?

Jack

With "Staggers." Does the lady drink?

Alonzo

Staggers is an old dog in human shape. He is the villain who stands between me and my dream of happiness. He is the guardian of my souls' idol. He pretends to be a connosieur.

Jack

What sort of "con?"

Alonzo

An art connosieur. Imogene is beautiful, affectionate and accomplished. She is heiress to an immense fortune and I want to marry her.

Jack

I wouldn't mind marrying her myself.

Alonzo

"Staggers", her guardian objects to me - accuses me of lack of genius in my art - claims I must demonstrate it. Imogene, you see, is from California.

Jack

And I suppose Staggers is from Missouri.

Alonzo

By the terms of her grandfather's will, should Imogene marry anybody without Staggers' consent and approval, her fortune is to revert to a home for superannuated forty-niners. Her grandfather was a forty-niner and this Staggers worked himself into the old man's confidence and trust. Imogene loves me. I saved her life at the risk of my own.

Jack

You did?

Alonzo

I also saved Staggers' life at the same time.

Jack

That was careless of you. You were too heroic.

Alonzo

He hated me for it. He wishes to marry Imogene himself.

Cynthia

Ah, I see this Staggers would approve of himself as a husband - the "thick plottens."

Alonzo

I brought it to an issue though. He said - could I show him a statue of my own production on which was expended my own work, he would consent. Well, I prepared for this visit to-day. I obtained that cast those furniture men smashed this morning of "Liberty enlightening the world."

Jack

But that wasn't your own work.

Alonzo

Didn't I work its owner to get it?

Jack

Forgive me, Pal, you're one of us after all. But he could tell it was a plaster cast.

Alonzo

His eyes are queer - he's half blind.

Jack

Oh yes. He is "blind Staggers." I see - he's a disease.

Alonzo

Worse! Worse! I wish I was dead.

Jack

I have an idea. (Pause) What will you do for my sister and myself if we help you out?

Alonzo

How can you help me out?

Jack

By reproducing Liberty Englightening the World!

Alonzo

Impossible!

Jack

Not at all . When we were with old Kirk Mack's corn slave show, Cynthia and I appeared nightly in our great statuary xact as living replicas of Greek and Roman art. I did the "Dying Gladiator" - "Ajax defying the Lightening" - "Hercules leaning on his club" - "The Fighting Gaul!"

Alonzo

I can understand your "gall" all right. But how could you do the others with your shape?

Jack

Never mind about my shape. I've lived on it all my life.

Alonzo

But whom did Cynthia do?

Jack

Whom didn't she do? Everybody she got a chance to do. If you mean whom did she represent - "Venus" - "Dianna" - "Juno" - "Psyche " - "Helen of Troy" - "Minerva of Muscatine" - "Olga of Ottumwa" - "Lillian Russel" - "Mrs. Parkhurst" - and "Lydia Pinkham" - all with old Dr. Mack,s corn plasters on their toes.

Alonzo

I should have thought the police would have interfered.

Cynthia

They did, but old Mack used to hand them some of his "salve" and we slipped away.

Jack

Well, what do you say?

Alonzo

It's a desperate chance, but I'll take it.

Jack

Good and what do we get to assist in the game?

Alonzo

If you succeed, I will give you -- (Pause)

Jack and Cynthia

Yes?

Alonzo

I will give you my undying gratitude.

Jack

That's very good of you, but how much in dollars and cents?

Alonzo

I have only a few dollars and I haven't any cents.

Jack

That is evident. Well, we'll cut out the pennies and take the dollars. How many have you in your inside pocket?

Alonzo

About fifteen.

Jack

Fork them over.

Alonzo

Why, that will break me.

Jack

You'll get used to that if you travel with me. I am broke almost always except on occasions. I meet a boob. Come across! Come on, come on! (Snapping fingers)

Cynthia

I won't make up until you produce. Come on? Come on! (Snaps fingers)

Alonzo

What? Do you have to be bribed to bring two loving hearts together?

Cynthia

Sure Mike!

Alonzo

I haven't shown you my darlings picture. I have it here on a postal card.

Cynthia

I'd rather you'd show me the Indian head on a five dollar bill.

Alonzo

(Produces photo card) See how beautiful she is. Would you break her heart?

Jack

I'll break somebody's back if we don't get action soon.

Cynthia

(Looks at picture, shrisks) Oh! (Goes into fit of hysterics)

Jack

What's the matter?

Cynthia

Oh, the scoundrel! The scoundrel! It's he! I'd know those whiskers anywhere. I know them! I know them!

Jack

Whiskers! What whiskers! (Cynthia shrieks, waves card up and down, walks too and fro)

Alonzo

She must mean Staggers. He had long side whiskers when we were taken in that group, but he's shaved them off now.

Cynthia

He is "Staggers", eh? Henwas "Fitts."

Jack

Humph, I see - "Staggers" after "Fitts." The Staggers should come first. But we are wandering from the point. Come across with the "simoleons." (Snaps fingers)

Cynthia

No, let him keep his dirty money. What I do , I'll do for revenge and not for pay. I'll stretch his heart strings on my blooming lyre and play a devils dance threon. Scorpions - tarantulas - and centipedes shall banquet on his aged liver. Oh, I shall give him a bad half hour. Oh - on to the wardrobe trunk! (Grabs up the white washed torch) "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned. (Exits through curtains R.U)

Jack

We'd better hurry up with the stage setting if we expect to give this show. Cynthia means business. Say you, Alonzo Jenkins, what did you show us that picture for? Do you know you queered me out of your fifteen dollars! Revenge is all right, but it don't buy bread and beef. you had better get on your sculptors blouse and get the artistic atmosphere. I myself will wear your embroidered jacket and fez. (Changes to jacket and cap) There! (Strikes attitude) How do I look?

Alonzo

You look like a cigarette sign.

Jack

You're jealous! Now, remember I am a patron of the arts who has paid you thousands of dollars for your work. You may call me Prince Zekachewsky.

Alonzo

Prince what?

Jack

Zekachewsky. I am from the Balkans and am worth millions.

Alonzo

Look here, I can't pronounce that name.

Jack

What - "Zekachewsky?" Well, if you can't pronounce it - sneeze it. And understand right now , if you expect this affair to be carried to a successful termination, you must follow my lead in everything and obey orders. We must work together to foil this old fortune hunting schemer and marry the girl ourselves.

Alonzo

We marry the girl?

Jack

I'm speaking paregorically - we are partners.

Alonzo

Not im omigene.

Jack

Certainly not. I'm not suggesting any polyandrous arrangement. Of

course the young lady will choose the one she likes the most to give her hand and fortune.

Alonzo

That's already settled. She likes me the most.

Jack

She has not yet met me. Still this is absurd. We must not count our chickens before they are hatched.

Alonzo

I object to Imogene being characterized as a chicken by anyone and especially by you, Mr. Jack Tip.

Jack

prince Zekachewsky, if you please. (Bell rings) Ah, the bell! Get into your cage, put on your blouse - rumple up your hair. (Gives Alonzo dry shampoo). Assume a wrapt expression!

Alonzo

But I'm not rapped!

Jack

I'll rap you if you don't obey. Get in! Get in! Even if you are no artist, pretend to be one. (Pushes him off R) Now if you come out before the phychological moment, I will strip off your mask before your lady love and expose you for the imposter that you are. (Goes up. Puts his head through curtains R.U.) Hurry up the white wash, Cynthia. (Goes down to table, starts to take long drink. Bell rings again. Takes bottle from lips) You are entirely too previous with that bell. That "shot" hasn't touched the bull's eye yet. (Exits L.U.E. Alonzo steals out R., grabs bottle)

Alonzo

I like his nerve. I wish I had it. (Takes drink)

Jack

(Outside) Certainly! This is the abode of Jenkins, the genius. Come, I will conduct you to his "sanctum sanctorum." Take my arm!

Imogene

(Outside) Thank you, sir.

Alonzo

It is she - she - I like his nerve. (Exits R. carrying bottle. Enter Jack L.U.E. He leads Imogene on with grand air. Staggers, a near sighted peppery old individual follows)

Jack

(Looks around mysteriously, looks under table, behind articles of furniture, opens trunk, shuts it) It is evident he is not here.

Staggers

Whois not here?

Jack

My friend Alonzo. However, that is not strange. He is probably practicing the disappearance act. He is eccentric, my friend Alonzo. He has been studying Hindoo magic of late and has succeeded in making himself quite invisible at times.

Staggers

At all times to me. I never could see him.

Imogene

Invisible? Then aren't we to see him?

Jack

Be comforted. If his outer shell is not here, he may be with us still in spirit.

Staggers

(Sniffs) Yes, I smell the spirits.

Jack

Ah, very good. very good. I'll accept the hint. You and I will have a drink if the young lady don't mind.

Staggers

Sir, I don't drink.

Jack
(Starts, then shakes head incredulously) You - don't - drink?
Staggers
I don't drink because I don't drink. Besides, I signed the pledge years and years ago and if that isn't reason enough, I may inform you, sir, that I just had a drink before we came here.
Jack
Your excuse is accepted.
Staggers
I never offer excuses, sir.
Jack
I see you are without excuse.
Staggers
Of course if you insist on forcing me to take a drink --
Jack
I wouldn't be guilty of such a breach of good manners.
Staggers
I would be obliged to pass over that and take a drink, sir.
Jack
No, far be it from me to help you dig your drunkard's grave.
Staggers
What's that? Drunkard. Who's a drunkard? I can handle it or let it alone. I'll prove it to you. I'll take a drink now just to show you.
Jack
(Motions to table) Help yourself!
Staggers
(Crosses R., examines table with his glasses) Help myself? Help myself to what? There's nothing here. Look!
Jack
A true Kentucky gentleman always turns his back when his guest is at the decanter.
Imogene
And are you from Kentucky, Mr - Mr --?
Jack
Not "Mr." I am prince Zekachewsky of the Balkans and --
Staggers
Say, am I going to get that drink or not?
Jack
(Turns) Why, there was a bottle there but it has disappeared.
Imogene
Disappeared? Like Mr. Jenkins.
Staggers
(Sarcastically) I suppose they disappeared together. (Sits in arm chair)
Imogene
(Indignantly) Mr. Staggers! Your insinuation against Alonzo's habits is malicious.
Jack
What do you call this old man?
Imogene
Staggers, Prince.
Jack
Staggers, eh? Staggers - ahem! (Significantly)
Staggers
Yes, Staggers. What of it? (Gong and glass crash)
Jack
Nothing, sir. But let me warn you. You are sitting in the enchanted chair.
Staggers
Enchanted chair?
Jack

Jack
Yes, we call it the chairof Truth Anyone who occupies that chair and tells a lie, he is discovered immediately by the "Elect" of which I am one and retribution quickly follows him. So if you must lie, don't sit in that chair.

Staggers
Oh, fiddlesticks!

Jack
You may have powerful reasons for concealing your identity, but, beware!

Staggers
Why, my nam is Staggers. (Gong effect and crashoutside. Staggers jumps up and examines chair)

Jack
Aha!

Staggers
I've had enough of this. Come, Imogene, let's get out.

Imogene
Go if you like. I mean to stay. I want to see Alonzo. He expects me.

Jack
That's what they all say.

Imogene
All?

Jack
Yes, all the young ladies who visit Mr. Jenkins - his models, admirers, etc.

Imogene
And has he many?

Jack
Hundreds.

Alonzo
(Off stage) Say, cut that out.

Jack
He is certainly a killer. I could tell you a lot about --- (Gong and crash as before) but he has probably come back to earth by this. I will tell him you are here. (Exits R)

Staggers
What sort of a place is this anyhow? Let's go back to the hotel.

Imogene
We are here to see the statue and we'll see it. Remember our agreement.

Staggers
I am sure the fellow's a fake. There isn't any statue and that friend of his is either a lunatic or a confidence man.

Imogene
He is a prince. Didn't you hear him say so?

Staggers
I don't believe all I hear and you mustn't either.

Imogene
I don't, that is the reason; I got our agreement in black and white.

Staggers
It isn't worth the paper it's written on. I won't consent to you marrying anyone but me. I'm the only man that I as your guardian can conscientiously approve of. If you marry anybody else, bang goes your property to the superannuated forty-niners.

Imogene
Where will you be then? your guardianship will end and you'll have to look for another meal ticket.

Staggers
Stubborn girl!

Alonzo
(Enters dressed in blouse) Imogene! My fair Imogene!

Imogene
Alonzo! my brave Alonzo! (Bus. They embrace)
Imogene
Ah! dearest, are you back on earth again?
Alonzo
Earth? When I hold you in my arms I feel I am in Heaven.
Imogene
Oh, Alonzo.
Alonzo
Oh, Imogene!
Staggers
Oh pickles! (Falls in arm chair)
Alonzo
(Turns) Ah, the old man looks sick.
Staggers
Who's sick? I'll make you sick in a minute when I expose you, you fraud! Sick? I never felt better in my life. (Gong and prolonged crash)
Staggers
(Jumps up) Damn this chair! (Jack enters R. with bottle)
Imogene
Dear Alonzo, is the statue ready?
Alonzo
I think so, honey bug! (To Jack) Is the statue "dressed?" (Whispers)
Jack
(Whispers) Of course, that was the understanding, wasn't it? It wasn't to be undressed, was it? (Alonzo and Jack pantomime together as if inquiring whether Cynthia is on platform yet. Lights go gradually down. Jack stands by curtains to work same)
Alonzo
Imogene, darling! Now you shall behold my masterpiece. (Music. America. The curtains slowly part, show Cynthia made up as "Liberty enlightening the World." The Stage is 3/4's dark. Spot from side on figure. Pause)
Imogene
How beautiful! Alonzo, you are a genius. Look! Mr. Staggers, look! (Staggers puts on glasses)
Staggers
What! Oh, what a monstrosity! Do you call that a statue? It's a freak. It has no more shape than a cigar store Indian. I am surprised at your effrontery, sir, in inviting us to gaze on such an object. Look at that form - look at that face. You'll have to chisel off the nose to make it human. It is evident that marble woman has no legs. Take it away - break it up - bury it!
Imogene
Do you know what you are talking about?
Staggers
Of course I know. There was never anything human looked like that. I'll swear it as sure as my name is Staggers.
Cynthia
(In hollow tones) Your name is not Staggers.
Staggers
Eh, what?
Cynthia
I know you, "Bill Fittz" though you've lost your whiskers.
Staggers
What! The thing's alive.
Jack
What's alive?
Staggers
That thing. Didn't you hear it speak?

Jack
Speak? Certainly not.
Alonzo
How can a legless, marble monstrosity speak? You are crazy sir.
Imogene
I've known he's crazy for some time.
Staggers
I tell you I heard it, I heard it.
Jack
It was the voice of conscience you heard on account of your wicked falsehoods. You venerable liar!
Alonzo
You antique Annanias.
Imogene
You superannuated falsefier!
Staggers
I'll find out about this. (Going towards Cynthia)
Jack
What are you going to do?
Staggers
I'm going to touch that statue and find out if it's a live one.
Jack
I do all the touching in this establishment. (Intercepts him. They struggle. Staggers breaks away from him) Well then! Meet your fate! (Staggers rushes up to Cynthia who knocks him down with torch) (He falls knocked out at foot of pedestal. Gong and crash kept up for Curtain)

C U R T A I N

---oooOOOOOOOooo---

Act Second.

Same set, ten minutes later.
At Rise:-- Staggers is discovered on couch R. Jack bending over him. Alonzo and Imogene over L. together. Cynthia still made up as statue down C. Demi-john and several bottles on table. Staggers coat and vest on chair)

Alonzo

He's been out now a quarter of an hour.

Jack

(Goes over, takes watch out of Staggers' vest) Not quite, only a few minutes. (Puts watch in his own pocket)

Imogene

That was an awful blow. Suppose she had killed him?

Alonzo

I don't wish Cynthia any harm, but for our sakes, I wish she had. Imogene! Love Dove!

Imogene

My angel Alonzo! (Bus. They embrace)

Cynthia

There ain't any old "Dodo" going to make remarks about my shape without him getting his.

Jack

He's coming to. Quick Cynthia, to your perch. Romeo and Juliet, hide yourself. We will now proceed with the second degree. (Cynathia goes up, exits xxx into recess closing curtains. Alonzo and Imogene exeunt R)

Staggers

(Groans) Oh! Oh! (Rises, sits on couch. Rubs his head)

Jack

Thank Heaven, sir, you're still alive. I feared those last fits would have carried you off.

Staggers

(Suspiciously) Last what?

Jack

"Fits" - f-i- double t-z - "fits."

Staggers

Is that the way you spell "fits?"

Jack

Certainly. How do you spell it?

Staggers

Why, what kind of fits?

Jack

your kind. (Picks up demijohn)

Staggers

What are you giving me? (Indignantly rising)

Jack

I'm going to give you your medicine. The doctor said you must have it everytime you come to and seem normal.

Staggers

What! Has there been a doctor here?

Jack

Yes, a half dozen times in the last twenty four hours.

Staggers

What, have I been here twenty four hours?

Jack

Sure.

Jack

Sure

Staggers

Impossible, what's the date?

Jack

April the first.

Staggers

That's to-morrow.

Jack

Before to-morrow I'll convince you it's to-day.

Staggers

What did the doctor say?

Jack

He said you were suffering from acute idiopathic mania, superinduced by traumatic insanity. He said you were afflicted with headache.

Staggers

(Feeling) Headache? That's so.

Jack

Irascibility of temper, confusion of thoughts, failing memory, inaptitude for business, a constant feeling of fatigue. In short, his prognosis is unfavorable.

Staggers

Say, what sort of a doctor is she?

Jack

A very cheerful sort of a chap. He took a great interest in your ward, Miss Imogene and has a great sense of humor. There was a capital battle of wits between them as you lay there frothing at the mouth .

Staggers

Frothing at the mouth?

Jack

Yes and you barked like a dog.

Staggers

Humph! Did I bite anyone?

Jack

No, I removed your upper and lower plates. I feared you might swallow them. When I saw you coming to, I replaced them.

Staggers

That's real kind of you. Suppose I should break out again and swallow them?

Jack

The doctor and I talked over that and we agreed if you choked to death he would be rid of a great deal of trouble. If they reached your stomach, it would give the doctor a chance to perform a skillful and entertaining operation.

Staggers

Indeed, but suppose I should try to bite you now.

Jack

I should knock your block off with that Indian club there.

Staggers

Say, I'm going away from here. Where are my clothes?

Jack

There's your coat and vest, but xxd the doctor said you mustn't leave until he returns with some other doctors.

Staggers

More doctors? Say, what do they want to do? Hold a clinic?

Jack

Something like that. A postmortem - or some other little old thing.

Staggers

This doctor is a humorist.

Jack

Well, I should say. When you were in your paroxysm, he asked your name and Imogene giggled. He says his name is " taggers." And the doctor answered brightly the old stiff ought to be called "Fittz." Then we all giggled.

Staggers

That's what the statue called me.

Jack

Are you going to begin again the idea of a statue talking? What you heard was the voice of conscience.

Staggers

Sir, I have no conscience.

Jack

That's what Imogene said.

Staggers

The little cat! I'll fix her. (Putting on coat and vest. Feels in pockets) Look here, have you been here all the time?

Jack

Yes, except now and then when I had to run down stairs after medicine for you and refreshment for myself.

Staggers

(Picks up demi-john, smells it) I suppose you got the medicine for me and refreshment for yourself in the same place?

Jack

Yes, whenever I felt run down, I ran down.

Staggers

Well, I find my money is all "run down" to nothing.

Jack

Yes, that went when I went.

Staggers

And where's my watch?

Jack

That's run down too. I am giving it the rest cure at my mother's brother's place around the corner.

Staggers

So sir, you are a thief.

Jack

No sir, I am a financier, dining on lobster.

Staggers

I will expose you. I will expose this house. I will have you in jail. You and your confederate, that fake Alonzo.

Jack

What, the man who saved your life?

Staggers

I don't thank him a bit. See what he has brought me to. If he hadn't been a scoundrel, he would have saved my life and taken the two dollar bill I offered him, have thanked me and gone about his business, but no, he would butt in to my affairs and thwart me in my designs of marrying an heiress just because she's stuck on him. Where's Imogene? I suppose you'll tell me she's "run down" too.

Jack

She has. She and her Alonzo and the doctor all "runned down" together. They have gone to the court. Alonzo, the Brave, and the fair Imogene are to be wedded and then as a celebration, the doctor and his accomplices whom we expect any minute will declare you a hopeless lunatic and you will be sent to an asylum.

Staggers

What? I'm not a lunatic.

Jack

That's what they all say. But what does it matter? You will be in time.

Staggers

Say, look here, you're not a bad sort of fellow. I know you will do anything for money you'd perjure yourself, you'd sell your very soul. Now I may be dotty, but I had some money planted that you never got on to.

Jack

Strange! I don't see how it escaped muh!

Staggers

I carry it for emergencies.

Jack
Where do you carry it?
Staggers
In my sock.
Jack
I never thought of searching a gentleman there.
Staggers
Now, I'll give you this money --
Jack
That's very considerate. It saved me the mortification of taking it.
Staggers
On condition that you expose this awful plot against me. Tell how you saw me abused, how you robbed me.
Jack
Sure. (Takes roll away from Staggers)
Staggers
Swear as to the details of this miserable conspiracy, swear that I am not a lunatic.
Jack
Sure. Have you got any more money in the other sock?
Staggers
Swear and we will have the "boob" Alonzo in a dungeon.
Jack
Sure.
Staggers
The deceitful Imogene in a prison cell.
Jack
Sure!
Staggers
And you in consideration of turning States' evidence will in mitigation get a light sentence on the island.
Jack
Sure.
Staggers
Then we understand one another. You will swear I am not insane.
Jack
Sure! One lunatic ought to do what he can for another. The only thing, how in blazes are we going to get out of here?
Staggers
What's that? What is this place?
Jack
A private mad house. Wait a minute. I'm going to get you something to play with.
Staggers
To play with?
Jack
Yes, a feather and a little molasses. You see, you dip your fingers in the molasses, then you grab the feather between the thumb and finger so, (Illustrates) then with the other thumb and finger, you pull it off, so, and then you pull it back again and I find it very soothing when I suffer from weak nerves.
Staggers
From what I've seen of you your nerve is the strongest part of you. And you claim to be a lunatic?
Jack
Sure. Same as you. When I come back, I'll fight you for the lunatic title.
Staggers
No, no.
Jack
Yes, I'll match my "fits" against yours. This is my day to have them.

Staggers

No, no. Tell me - how did you come to be insane?

Jack

It was wished on me.

Staggers

Wished on you? (Aside) I'll humor him. (Aloud) Wished on you? By whom?

Jack

By the marble lady there - Cynthia.

Staggers

Cynthia? (Starts)

Jack

Don't be frightened! She won't wish it on you. There's no need. You were born foolish. But I will keep your guilty secret - the secret of your birth. Hush! Hush! Hush! (Mysteriously) I will pluck you a feather from the canary's tail. (Exits L)

Staggers

(Attempts to follow, door is slammed in his face and locked) Oh Lord! (Falls back) If I am not mad soon, I will be yet. To think of the treacher of Imogene and to thinik I planned to make her my wife. I promised to marry her. If the "superannuated forty-niners" ever hear of this, they will gloat on ghoulish glee. If I could only "skid" out of here, I'd be "skud" in a moment. (Looks out of window) Fifteen feet down! If I jumped, I'd break my neck and damage my dignity. No use! No use! And Cynthia! What did he mean by calling that marble monstrosity "cynthia." And I'm sure I heard it speak and call me "Fittz." Itmentioned my alfalfas too. Oh, this is a horible dream! I'll take another look at it. (Unpins curtains, cautiously, peeping) (Voices outside ib chorus) Rubber! Rubber!)(Starts) Those must be the other lunatics. Oh Lord, but I am nervous. I believe if he'd return with that feather and molasses I'd try it. (Pulls curtains apart, discloses Cynthia as before, but with her back turned. Rear view) Hello! They've turned her around! And they call that a statue. Well, nobody can tell me that her feet are not both lefts. I don't like her curves any more from this view point behind, than I did before. I'll get my glasses. (Turns, feels in pocket) Where are they? (Goes over to chair by couch) Oh yes, they fell out of my pocket. (Picks up spectacles from chair. While he is turned, Cynthia assumes other position, extends hand with torch, looks down L.C)

Staggers

(Turns, starts) Now! Holy mackerel! I've got them again. (Shouts off F) Say, hurry up with that feather! (Gasps) Well, well! This stone woman can change any portion of her anatomy except her face. Why don't she change that? (Cynthia sticks her tongue out at him. Staggers groans, backs away)

Cynthia

Willie! Willie! Did you get that?

Staggers

Oh yes - "Willie! Willie!" I've got them - the "Willies" all right.

Cynthia

Look at me. Have you ever seen me before ? Of whom do I remind you?

Staggers

Humpy Dumpty!

Cynthia

What - slave?

Staggers

You suggest the clown in the Ringling show only you haven't pants.

Cynthia

Give me your hand! your hand, I say! (Commandingly. He timidly offers right hand. She takes it with her left. He leads her on tip toe down stage)

Cynthia

(Drops his hand) Why, you're as cold as ice.

Staggers

You're not so warm yourself. (Shivers) Br-r-r!

Cynthia

How could I be, petrified as I have been.

Staggers

Petrified! petrified!

Cynthia

Yes, at times!

Staggers

Oh, you're a "stiff", eh?

Cynthia

Behold in me the famous cataleptic of the ages.

Staggers

Cat? What kind of a cat?

Cynthia

Cataleptic, I said. I go into trances that last sometimes for years.

Staggers

For years? That is sometime. Don't you feel drowsy now?

Cynthia

No, I just woke up.

Staggers

I wish I could.

Cynthia

It was you who awakened me.

Staggers

I'm sorry. Go to sleep and I won't do it again.

Cynthia

You can't help it. you are my soul mate of the ages.

Staggers

Soul mate of the ages? See here, I'm not as old as that.

Cynthia

You are! You are! (Embraces him)

Staggers

Have it your own way.

Cynthia

Oh, deceitful Willie. False, perjured fleeting Willie! Do you deny that you are what you are? Don't my caresses bring back the memories of years now past?

Staggers

That hugging business does seem familiar and you do it pretty well for an "old stiff:".

Cynthia

What's that?

Staggers

I mean an old cat. Say, what sort of a cat did you say you were? Oh yes, a cat dyspeptic, an aged dyspeptic cat. Oh yes, I gotcher now, I gotcher.

Cynthia

Yes, Willie and I've got you and we'll part nomore. We'll remain here together.

Staggers

What, here in this mad-house?

Cynthia

Mad-house? Willie, you're crazy.

Staggers

Yes, I know I am, that's why I'm here. How was it they caught you too?

Cynthia

I was dug up.

Staggers

Scoundrels! Why didn't they let you rest in peace?

Cynthia

When you ran away from me and went to California, I turned to stone and was carried around the country and exhibited as the petrified woman, like the Cardiff giant. I was called the Muscatine Venus. We ceased to be attractions and were shelved.

Staggers

I see, you were barred on the big time.

Cynthia

My manager who by the way is my younger brother, Jack Trip, had me put in the family vault and only took me twice, yesterday to impersonate the statue that struck you so hard.

Staggers

Yes, you nearly knocked my "coco" off. I feel it still.

Cynthia

Your presence warmed me into life and I am again a living breathing woman, your Cynthia.

Staggers

Say, what sort of Bull is this you're handing me?

Cynthia

Bull? Bull? (In rising temper) Isn't your name William Fittz?

Staggers

It was Fittz - yes. Now it's Stagger changed by the California legislature.

Cynthia

Wasn't your wife's name Cynthia Trip? Didn't you basely desert her?

Staggers

I ran away when she tried to knock out my brains with a rolling pin, yes.

Cynthia

I am that woman, I am your deserted bride.

Staggers

Pooh! She's dead and buried.

Cynthia

Pooh yourself. She lives and has been resurrected. (Chases him around stage) Fool, would you war against the infinite? Would you defy the omnipotent powers that can annihiliate and destroy - that miserable body of thine and reduce it to nothingness? Our souls are immortal. They have met before, in ages past, several times.

Staggers

I have no recollection of it.

Cynthia

you were once Captain Kid, the Pirate. You visited Boston where I was a member of one of our best families --

Staggers

They're all best families in Boston.

Cynthia

You lured me from my happy home and I became your fourteenth bride. Your thirteenth marriage being an unfortunate one.

Staggers

Thirteen is a hoodoo.

Cynthia

I helped you swell your pirate store and waded myself knee deep through gore. You were then William Kid. Deny it if you dare!

Staggers

Look here, woman , I'll acknowledge that I was William Fittz and I married Cynthia Trip, but don't you try to charge me

with any "Kid" business, 'cause it don't go. Stop your kiding.

Cynthia

You acknowledge then beingmy husband who ran away?

Staggers

Yes, yes , for the love of Mike, yes.

Cynthia

(Shouts loudly) Police! Police! Police! (Alonzo and Imogene enter R. Jack made up as copper with fat stomach)

Omnes

What's the matter? What's the matter?

Cynthia

Arrest that man, my husband, who basely deserted me seven years ago.

Jack

What! Oh, you wretch! Seven years desertion. Say Bo , you'll get the limit.

Alonzo

The poor woman is speaking the truth. We heard him confess, didn't we, Imogene?

Imogene

We did. Oh, isn't it awful?

Jack

Seven years, eh? You ought to have your neck broke! (To Cynthia) Were there any children?

Cynthia

Two! (Sobbing) Boohoo! Boohoo!

Jack

(Shakes staggers) You old rat! Leaving your wife along for seven years and her having to raise two children? How old are they?

Imogene

One is four and the other ~~two~~ only two and they are darlings.

Staggers

And I've been away seven years. Hoop la! (Calls) Waiter, bring feathers and molasses around. Give me a whole canary bird and a cocaine cocktail. Everybody is "nutty." We're all "buggy." Hoop la! Hoop la! Hoop la! (Runs around stage) (Jumping on sofa, grab chair, uses it as hobby horse) Get up! Get up! I challenge you all for the big house championship! (Breaks from Cynthia who grabs him, gets to window, dives out head first. Cynthia clutches at the bottoms of his trousers, they come off in her hands. As he goes out of sight, glass crash outside)

Cynthia

(Flourishing trousers) What am I to do with these?

Jack

Put them on, Cynthia , they belong to you.

C U R T A I N

---oooOOOOOOOooo---

Act Third.

Five minutes later. Same set.
At Rise:-- Cynthia is discovered C. made up as in beginning of play - apparently stirring up white wash in bucket. Standing on box over R. is Staggers in white Roman shirt, white tights, etc. Alonzo has large hite wash brush which he applies vigorously to Staggers legs. Imogene is waiting with large powder rag covered with powdered chalk down R)

Imogene
Aren't you nearly through? I want to get at him.

Alonzo
It is the best I can do. I might apply this white-wash an inch thick - the yellow in him still shows through. Well,, get down! (Staggers stands apparently dazed. Alonzo pokes him in stomach with brush) Get down, I say!

Staggers
Ugh! (Winchi g and doubling up) Why don't you murder me at once, you bum sculptor? (Gets down from box)

Alonzo
There's gratitude for you and I am probably saving your life. You ought to be glad to be whitewashed?

Imogene
(Plumps Staggers into chair, covers his face with chalk) Yes, my darling Alonzo, he ought to be glad.

Staggers
Oh, I've been white washed before when I was an alderman in Frisco. That was to save my office. I suppose I can stand it to save my life. (Imogene rabs powder in his eye)

Staggers
Ouch! Don'd do that!

Imogene
He is awfully yellow, isn't he? Well, with enough white powder on his naturalcolor, he'll seem like old Ivory.

Cynthia
Yes, especially from his eyes upward - "solid ivory." Let us hope Armaud will not come until we've finished with him. He will think he's a statue and pass him by.

Stat gers
Who in blazes is Armand?

Cynthia
My friend, Armand ~~St~~ Duval.

Staggers
Oh, he's the "gink" is he?

Cynthia
He is the gentleman who has vowed to eat you alive. He is known on the big time as "Bosco." He is at present our next doo neighbor and he is passionately in love with me. You did an awful thing, Willie, when you jumped out that window, berefit of your lower garments. You have ruined my reputation forever - not only with Armand , but the hole neighborhood saw you. (Alonzo shakes his head, exitsL.)

Staggers
Did you tell Armand? I was your long absent husband?

Cynthia
I did and he ground his teeth and said - "He deserved all that's coming to hi ? How dare he stay away so long? How doubly dare he come back?

Staggers
I agree with him.

Cynthia
He eats a live snake every show. He swears he will eat you as an appetizer.

Staggers
Say, couldn't we pacify this cannibal?

Cynthia

Nothing but the sight of you weltering in your gore will still his mad jealousy. I wept at his feet, I implored him. He called me his "little fluttering bird" and said, "Never mind, Cynthia, you may be this monster's wife. You soon shall be his widow." Ah, Armand, has a has a most poetical nature.

Staggers

He must have. But say, can't this little trouble be fixed up? I'm perfectly willing to surrender you to the gentleman.

Cynthia

(In temper) What? After me going to all this trouble to save you? Hence! Hence to your pedestal! (Points to curtains) Remember you are Julius Caesar, now, in lifeless stone.

Staggers

I feel more like Dennis Mudd in the stock yards.

Alonzo

(Enters hurriedly) Quick Fittz! Quick if you would save your miserable life. Armand Duval is coming upstairs with a knife that long. (Indicating long butcher's knife) He is thirsting for your blood.

Staggers

(Shakes with fear) Oh Lord!

Alonzo

(Shakes Staggers' hand) Good-bye, old man! In case I don't see you again alive - good luck!

Imogene

Good-bye, Guardy dear, as you're about to die, I don't mind forgiving you. Alonzo and I will cherish your memory, although it is a great relief to us to get rid of you.

Cynthia

Farewell, Willie! If Armand discovers our plan and your mortal clay should leave this sphere mundane, you can at least revisit us as a spirit. At any rate, I will call you up.

Staggers

Call me up? Where in Hell do you think I'm going? You'd better call me up - any of you. If I come back, I'll bring my coffin lid with me and wear it out on the whole gang of you.

Jack

(Off stage) Eat 'em alive! Eat 'em alive!

Alonzo

Quick to your place. Don't move - don't breathe! Make him think you're a work of art. (Hurries staggers to platform. Comedy bus. of placing him in position. Enter Jack made up with ferocious moustache and whiskers, slouched hat and cloak. He carries long knife. As he enters, the women scream)

Jack

Where is he? Where is the scorpion? Who has hissed sweet nothings into Cynthia's ear? Produce him at once that I may gorge myself upon him! I will feed fat my ancient grudge upon him.

Cynthia

Oh Armand! Think not always of eating.

Jack

Madam! Retire at once from this bloody sight! (Flourishes knife) I eat 'em alive - eat 'em alive!

Alonzo

What does the gentleman eat alive?

Jack

Snakes!

Alonzo

Here, try some pickled. Here's a jug full. (Offers demijohn)

Jack

Thanks! Here's looking at you. (Takes drink) Now produce the victim! I long to swoop to my revenge.

Cynthia

Oh, spare his miserable life!

Jack

I understand madam - you tremble for him.

Cynthia

No , I shudder at you.

Jack

Ha, ha! You jest!

Cynthia

Not just now. I wouldn,t have you perish by the hangman's rope. Oh spare him - spare him!

Jack

Why should I?

Cynthia

Because - because - he's not fit to live.

Jack

Ah, you love him still?

Cynthia

No, I love my back alimony.

Jack

(Lays down knife) Ah, you're false, you're heartless - toothless - I mean truthless and make asale of that which you call love to him who bids the highest. In me you have a man who truly loves him, who will share your last dollar with you. You are mocking him with a sacrifice you have not the courage to make. your house - your horses - your gas buggies - your diamonds and your dogs, you refuse to give up for me. And what do you retain with them? The bitter pangs of anguish and remorse which fill your breast even while it heaves beneath a weight of gems - the fixed despair which sits upon that brow on which those diamonds look down in mockery and this is what the man you love has done for you - there are his triumphs - the wages of your shame! (During this speech, Jack grabs Cynthia by throat, shakes her from one side of stage to other. She interrupts with cries of "Armand!" "Mercy!" Etc. Staggers sees knife on table, steals down, reaches for knife. Alonzo intercepts him, gets knife first, chases Staggers back to platform, pricking him with point of knife. Staggers resumes position on platform)

Cynthia

Oh Armand! You have pierced my heart! I am stinged - I am stinged - I mean stung!

Jack

Then produce the viper that has stung thee. Again and again - I ask you for the first and only time, produce him!

Cynthia

I haven't got him about me now.

Alonzo

While you have been talking, your hated rival has made his escape.

Jack

What, am I foiled! Curses! Curses! Well then, there's nothing left for me to do except to break up the furniture. (Turns) Ha! (~~Sxxx~~ Sees Staggers) What is that?

Alonzo

A statue of mine.

Jack

What, and you have the hardi-hood to acknowledge it? What is it?

Alonzo

It's my idea of Julius Caesar.

Jack

Aren't you afraid of being haunted by Caesar's ghost?

Alonzo
Sir! I am an artist!
Jack
I am another. I can handle a mallet and chisel myself. Don't think you are the only one who can break stone. I could improve the expression of your Caesar.
Alonzo
I don,t believe it.
Jack
I could by chipping off one half of its nose. I'll bet you a quarter I can.
Alonzo
I don,t care to have any of my work mangled.
Jack
What's a little mangling now and then in the cause of art? I'll bet you a quarter.
Imogene
Humor the wild man.
Cynthia
Yes, humor him! Humor him - he's dangerous.
Alonzo
Oh well - (Aside) (To Cynthia) Don't move when he chips you. Remember we are saving your life! ((Jacps picks up mallet and chisel)
Jack
Don,t be a piker! I'll bet you a quarter I can improve it just by chipping the nose an inch That left eye ought to be gouged out an inch too.
Alonzo
I'll bet you a quarter, you can,t improve it even if you gouge out both eyes.
Jack
I'll bet you a quarter, I can.
Staggers
And I'll bet you a quarter a piece you don't. I can xxstand death, but not by inches.
Alonzo
Coward, you deserve your fate.
Staggers
Yes, I'm a coward, but have you ever seen a coward fight? Just watch me! (Staggers hits Jack under the jaw, drops him. The women scream. He makes attack on Alonzo who runs away, exits R. Imogene screams and follows Alonzo off R. Cynthia exits L.) Ha! (Goes over, kicks Jack) Eat 'em alive! Eat 'em alive! (Goes over to demijohn, takes long drink) Get up, Armand. Let's hafe another round& I'm a fighter, I am! (Takes another drink)
Cynthia
(Enters with rolling pin) Just have one with me.
Staggers
Another drink, sure!
Cynthia
No, another fight.
Staggers
Cynthia, please give me - my pants!
Cynthia
I will, you'll need them to go to prison. I'll teach you to come into my house and start things. How dare you beat up my little brother?
Staggers
What? Armand - your little brother?
Jack

Jack

(Takes off disguise) Yes, Heaven help me, I am.

Staggers

Aha! So Bosco, your right name is Bunco. Give me back my money!

Cynthia

He has already given it to me. It's all in the family. (Waving rolling pin) Do you want it, Willie?

Staggers

No, thank you, I don't want anything.

Imogene

(Enters with Alonzo) Guardian!

Staggers

Don't bother me, I am your guardian no more. I resign.

Alonzo

Then you consent to me marrying Imogene?

Staggers

Take her and go to --

Cynthia

Willie!

Staggers

I mean - take her and be miserable. I hope you'll kill one another.

Imogene

We'll not do any such thing. Alonzo is going to live for me and his art. Some day he will produce a real statue.

Cynthia

Yes, of liberty.

Staggers

Cynthia, I never want to hear the word liberty again. It makes me think of jail.

C U R T A I N

---oooOOOOOOOOooo---